DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 398 738 FL 024 040

AUTHOR Bamgbose, Ayo
TITLE Issues in Second Language Learning in a Multilingual Context.
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 15p.; In: Pragmatics and Language Learning. Monograph Series, Volume 5, p25-35, 1994; see FL 014 038.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Context; Curriculum Design; *Educational Environment; *Educational Policy; Educational Strategies; Foreign Countries; Instructional Materials; Language Attitudes; Language Planning; Language Teachers; *Multilingualism; *Pragmatics; Public Policy; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *Second Languages
IDENTIFIERS *Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that while there are factors common to second language learning in both monolingual and multilingual contexts, there are also predictable differences in degree arising from a one-many or many-one language learning situation, common to both contexts, as opposed to a many-many language learning situation typical of the multilingual context. In the context of current language learning and teaching practices in Nigeria, issues in language policy (especially with regard to language choice at different levels of education), language attitudes, curriculum design and content, instructional materials, and language teacher role and training are examined and attention is drawn to the problems arising from these factors in relation to some current approaches to language learning and teaching. Contains 35 references. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Pragmatic and Language Learning
Monograph Series, Volume 5, 1994

ISSUES IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN A MULTILINGUAL CONTEXT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Ayo Bamgbose
University of Ibadan, Nigeria

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Lawrence F. Bouton
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

ED 398 738

ABSTRACT

Second language learning in a monolingual situation is perhaps not different *in kind* from such learning in a multilingual situation, since there are factors that are common to both contexts. There are, however, predictable differences in degree arising from a one-many or many-one language learning situation common to both contexts as opposed to a many-many language learning situation typical of a multilingual context. Against the background of language learning and teaching in Nigeria, issues of policy (especially with regard to language choice at given levels of education), attitudes, curriculum, material, teacher, and culture are examined and attention is drawn to the problems arising from these factors in relation to some current approaches to language learning and teaching.

Second language learning occurs in a variety of contexts including foreign versus non-foreign environment, formal versus informal setting, and monolingual versus multilingual situation.

A foreign environment is one in which the intended target language is not normally used. For example, anyone learning Hausa or Kiswahili in the USA can only learn it as a foreign language. On the other hand, a non-foreign environment can be either one where the target language is natively spoken or at least used as an official language. Hence someone learning English in England or in Nigeria is said to be learning it as a second language. The distinction between a second language (L2) and a foreign language (FL) is not based on the environment of acquisition alone. The possibilities of informal acquisition and development of non-native varieties are also characteristics of a L2. In spite of the technical definition of second language learning "to include all learning of languages other than the first in whatever situation or for whatever purpose" (Cook 1991:5), we shall have occasion in this paper to make use of the traditional distinction between L2 and FL where necessary.

A formal setting is a structured one designed specifically for language learning. This is typically the classroom. An informal setting, however, is a natural one where a learner picks up a language through interaction with those who speak it. An L2 may be acquired in a formal or informal setting, but a FL is typically learnt in a formal setting. In spite of Krashen's (1981)

FL:C24046

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

distinction between *acquisition*, which is a result of acquired knowledge in informal settings, and *learning*, which is a result of consciously learnt knowledge, we follow the general practice among second language researchers in referring to both phenomena as either second language acquisition (SLA) or second language learning (Cook 1991:1; Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:6; Widdowson 1990:20-21).

MONOLINGUAL VERSUS MULTILINGUAL SITUATIONS

From the point of view of L2/FL acquisition, the distinction between a monolingual and a multilingual situation may be characterized in two ways — either in terms of source language (SL) groups or in terms of target language (TL) types.

In a monolingual situation, two kinds of SL groups are typically involved in L2/FL acquisition. On the one hand, several SL groups may be learning the predominantly spoken language in the country as a L2; for example, immigrants or ethnic minorities learning English in England. Let us refer to this as the *many-one* situation. On the other hand, a single SL group may be involved in the acquisition of several languages; for example, native English speakers in the USA learning French, German or Yoruba. This we may call the *one-many* situation. Both these situations also occur in a multilingual context. For example, several SL groups in Nigeria learning English will count as a many-one situation, while a single SL group learning English and another Nigerian language counts as a one-many situation.

The one situation which is only typical of a multilingual context is the existence of several dominant SL groups (and not just minorities) trying to acquire several target languages. For example, when major language groups in Nigeria acquire English, another Nigerian language and a foreign language, this is not comparable to minority SL groups in a monolingual situation acquiring the dominant language and perhaps thereafter a foreign language. In fact, such a case is more like two sequential situations: a many-one followed by a one-many situation. The multilingual case is more aptly referred to as a *many-many* situation.

The other way the difference between a monolingual and a multilingual situation may be characterized is by the type of language acquired. In any situation where more than one language is acquired, such languages are typically foreign languages in a monolingual situation, but they can be foreign languages and/or second languages (L2s) in a multilingual situation. What is even more interesting is that it is only in a multilingual situation that more than one L2 may be acquired. A typical example of this is SL groups in Nigeria learning English and a Nigerian language as L2 as well as French as a FL.

It should be clear from the above comparison that L2/FL acquisition in a multilingual context is not very different from such acquisition in a monolingual context. The differences observed are not so much differences *in kind* but rather *in degree*. It follows from the comparison that the same SLA theories may be found useful for both contexts, and similar problems in respect of methodology, syllabus design, teacher training, preparation of materials etc., may well be encountered, and hence, experiences gained in one context may be found useful in the other. However, the few differences identified point to a greater complexity in second language acquisition in a multilingual context.

From the point of view of language planning, more complicated policy decisions and

implementation procedures are called for. Teacher supply problems are multiplied as provision has to be made for the teaching of more languages. Similarly, materials have to be prepared for learning and instruction in many more languages, attitudes (especially as they affect implementation of policy) have to be considered, and the ever-present problem of cultural bias and cultural interference has to be taken account of, especially in so far as it affects communication and the content of teaching materials. It is these problems that are taken up in the rest of this paper, particularly in the light of the Nigerian experience.

LANGUAGE POLICY

The basis of any language teaching program is a prior decision on language policy. Such a policy may in turn reflect the language policy objectives set for the community or the nation, the so-called "macro-policy goals" (Tollefson 1981). The basic manifestation of the policy is language choice: Which languages are to be taught in the educational system and at which levels? What problems may be encountered in the implementation of the adopted policy?

The choice of languages depends on a number of factors including historical, political, demographic, economic, religious, and linguistic. The historical factor includes practices that have been in existence for a long time. For example, the use of English as a medium of instruction from upper primary grades to the tertiary level in most African countries that were formerly British colonies is largely due to the historical factor. In fact, it is doubtful whether from the historical point of view, one can even talk of a choice, since, as has been pointed out elsewhere, language policies in Africa continue to be a manifestation of an inheritance situation with the colonial experience continuing to shape and define post-colonial policies and practices: "Thus while it would seem that African nations make policy in education, what they actually do is carry on the logic of the policies of the past" (Bamgbose 1991: 69).

The political factor is concerned with the role assigned to a language in the framework of the nation or the international community. It includes the need to give a prominent place in education to a country's official and/or national language, the need to communicate with neighbouring countries and the need to participate in international communication.

The demographic factor concerns the relative weighting given to languages based on number of speakers. Other things being equal, a language with ten million speakers is likely to be given greater prominence in the educational policy than one with half a million speakers. Hence, a country's major languages are sometimes prescribed as languages to be learnt as second languages by speakers of other languages.

The economic factor is often employed in a negative sense to rule out languages whose inclusion in the educational system may be very expensive. In this sense, the factor puts "small group" (or to use the better known term, "minority") languages at a disadvantage. But it is equally possible to apply the economic factor to the opportunity cost of compulsory instruction in a second language measured in terms of high drop-out rate, poor performance, high cost of imported expertise and the consequences of the use of ill-adapted material (Bokamba and Tlou 1980).

The religious factor leads to the inclusion of a language of religion in the educational system. An example of this is the provision for the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language in

junior secondary (high) schools in Nigeria.

The linguistic factor is concerned with the state of languages to be selected for use in education. Languages that already have good descriptions (including grammars and dictionaries) as well as substantial literature stand a better chance of being selected in contrast to those that are yet to be reduced to writing or adequately described.

In the light of the factors described above, Nigeria's educational language policy has made provision for five types of languages:

(a) A mother tongue (i.e a child's first language)
(b) A language of the immediate community (i.e. a language spoken by a wider community and generally learnt and used by those whose mother tongue is a small group or minority language).
(c) The three major languages: Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo selected on demographic grounds.
(d) English (as a second language)
(e) Foreign languages (i.e. French and Arabic)

Choosing which languages should be taught appears to be a much easier task than deciding at which level each language will feature. The age-old convention dating back to the missionary days has been to start with the mother tongue as a medium of instruction and continue with it for the first three years of primary education. Thereafter, English takes over as the medium of instruction till the end of the educational cycle. However, English is taught as a subject from the beginning.

The main bone of contention has always been the position of English in relation to the local languages. Should the teaching of English commence as soon as possible becoming the medium of instruction as early as possible or should a thorough grounding be given first in the mother tongue before English takes over as the medium of instruction? The pendulum has generally swung from one of these positions to the other, with the missionary practice serving as the mean between the two extremes. Under the doctrine of "earlier means better" and the alleged beneficial influence of the 'direct method' of L2/FL teaching, an approach known as "Straight for English" (which involves teaching in English from the child's first day at school) was introduced in Northern Nigeria in 1959 only to be abandoned seven years later. At the other end of the scale, an experimental project known as the Six-Year Primary Project involving the use of an African language as a medium of instruction for the entire elementary education, with English taught as a subject only, was introduced in 1970 in one school in Oyo State and subsequently extended to several other schools (Fafunwa et.al 1989). In spite of these variations, the traditional 3 plus 3 language medium is still the norm in most elementary schools.

The *National Policy on Education* (1981) adopts the traditional division of levels between Nigerian languages and English; but it also prescribes a language of the immediate community as an alternative to the mother tongue both at pre-primary and primary levels, while making it mandatory for one of the three major languages to be taught at L2 at Junior Secondary School. French and Arabic are optional foreign languages also to be offered at secondary level.

It is easier to prescribe than to enforce the levels at which languages are to be taught.

Distortions often arise from such factors as parental preferences, non-availability of teachers for certain languages, inadequacy of materials, half-hearted implementation, etc. To cite one or two examples, although pre-primary education is supposed to be in the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community, the fact that such schools are private fee-paying schools not funded by the Government weakens the ability of the educational authorities to enforce the policy. The parents who send their children to such schools prefer English and that is what they get. In the case of the major Nigerian languages required to be acquired as L2 in Junior Secondary Schools, this remains an empty provision since teachers are not available to cover the languages and the schools involved. Although certification is supposed to be denied to those who have not compiled with this provision, an escape route is found in waivers which are routinely given from year to year.

When the results of language teaching and learning in schools are evaluated and inadequacies are detected, it is obvious that the blame cannot go to quality of teacher, method of teaching, and poor materials alone. One of the first questions to be asked is the adequacy of the policy as well as its implementation procedures.

LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

Having a policy and implementing it well are not even enough for success in second language learning. The question of attitudes has to be seriously considered. It is the lack of interest in a mother tongue medium that is responsible for the derailment of this policy at pre-primary level. Similarly, it is the lack of interest in the acquisition of a major Nigerian language, especially on the part of speakers of small-group languages (in addition to lack of teachers) that has virtually killed the second Nigerian language policy.

It is generally accepted that there is a positive correlation between attitudes and motivation on the one hand and achievement on the other. Gardner et al (1977:234) states that studies on this topic "are in agreement showing that measures of achievement in the second language are substantially related to measures of attitudes and motivation." Their own detailed study of an intensive language program in French based on a complex of measures confirms the same general conclusion. In fact, Gardner's SLA model is based on a combination of attitudes, motivation and aptitude all leading to L2 success (Gardner 1985). Yet, experience has shown that there are cases in which attitudes are favourable and motivation quite high without a commensurate outcome in terms of achievement.

In Nigeria, there is overwhelming interest in the acquisition of English to the extent that in some elite families, English is forced on the children as the language of communication, while education in English-medium schools is highly favoured. In a small study of patterns of language use in the office, Adegbija (1991) reports percentages ranging from 80 to 98 percent in favour of English use in all activities except informal discussion with workmates. One reason for the great fascination with English is its "wealth-getting" role, i.e. the fact that it opens doors to the most lucrative jobs. Yet, in spite of the great interest, performance in English in secondary school certificate examination and University Matriculation examination has been very poor in the last few years. It follows from this that factors such as aptitude, learning environment, teaching facilities, adequate supply of teachers, suitable curriculum and method-

ology all have a role to play in the outcome of the learning encounter.

Appel and Muysken (1987) have drawn attention to studies showing that motivation may not necessarily be a good predictor of success in second language acquisition. They then conclude that "Second-language learners cannot be held responsible for their failure because of supposed lack of motivation. Attitudes and subsequent motivation result from certain social-political conditions. They are the result of interactions between characteristics of the individual second language learner and the social environment, especially the target-language community" (p. 94). While it is right to draw attention to the simplistic nature of the motivation-success equation, it is doubtful whether seeking refuge in Schumann's acculturation model is the solution. According to Schumann (1978) successful learning means becoming part of the target culture. If the second language learner feels superior or inferior to speakers of the target language, he or she will not learn the second language well. If this is so, one would wonder how subjugated colonial subjects made to feel inferior (and ultimately accepting that they are inferior) have managed to learn and be proficient in the English language?

LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

Just as language policy is basic to any language learning program, the curriculum deriving from the policy as well as the methodology forms a major plank in the implementation of the policy. In Nigeria, as in many other English Language Teaching (ELT) situations particularly in the Third World, the prevailing curriculum makes a division between Language and Literature, and within language, emphasis is placed on the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. A typical example is the "English Curriculum for Junior Secondary Schools" (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology 1985) which separates the teaching into the sub-headings: Vocabulary Development (including range of vocabulary in different domains), Comprehension (including listening and reading comprehension skills), Structures (rule-governed language structures and their use in communication), Spoken English, Writing (especially effective communication in the written medium), Literature, and Evaluation of attainment in the various skills.

The theoretical basis of the syllabus is presented as follows:

> Methodologically, there are three approaches to syllabus construction. First, we have the grammar-induced syllabus motivated by the need to internalize the rules and sentence structures of the language to the point of automaticity. Second is the situation-induced syllabus which attempts to tackle the problem of appropriateness as conditioned by situations. Finally, the meaning-induced syllabus attempts to help the language user recognize and use different varieties of sentence structures and words peculiar to a given semantic demand.

But the Nigerian experience in English language usage in our schools reveals that our problems cannot be solved if we restrict ourselves to a particular approach in syllabus construction. Consequently our approach is eclectic, for we have drawn from each of the three approaches with a view to solving our problems. (FMEST 1985:3).

In spite of the seeming emphasis on eclecticism of approach, the structures provided in some of the Units are reminiscent of the traditional information-processing model of SLA in which learning starts from controlled processes and progresses through drills and practice until it becomes automatic (McLaughlin, Rossman and McLeod 1983). The kind of syllabus with which this behaviourist model is associated has been called Structural-Oral-Situation (S-O-S) Pedagogy which Prabhu (1987:2) describes as the use of structurally and lexically graded syllabuses, situational presentation of all new teaching items, balanced attention to the four language skills (but with listening and speaking preceding reading and writing) and a great deal of controlled practice using techniques such as substitution and choral repetition.

While ELT in the Nigerian context has benefited from in-depth studies of inadequacies of mere structural syllabuses, with suggestions for the need to take into consideration varieties of use, registers, style, vocabulary development (Grieve 1964), the syllabuses in Nigerian L2 and French have not progressed very much from the audio-lingual approach with a progression from oracy to literacy, while the situational material in the case of Nigerian languages moves from naming to greetings, followed by other cultural situations in the home, in the market place, on the farm etc.

The reference to a "meaning-induced syllabus" in the ELT curriculum is an indication of the awareness of the requirements of the communicative approach to language teaching. Although reference is sometimes made to "a communicative syllabus", Widdowson (1990: 130) has correctly pointed out that there is no such thing as a communicative syllabus. What exists is a communicative methodology since even a structural syllabus can be taught in a communicative manner. Swan (1985) in a devastating critique of the communicative approach has advanced cogent reasons particularly against the usage-use dichotomy, appropriateness, lack of fit between notions and structures and the total negation of insights from the learner's mother tongue. One aspect of the critique which we cannot agree with is the contention that one doesn't need to be taught about use before knowing that such structural exercises as 'This is my room', 'This is my house', 'This is my book' which the author learnt in Russian can only be used in appropriate situational contexts. It may well be that this is a case where adult learners are superior to younger ones in the early stages of second language acquisition (Scarcella and Higa 1981), but there is an actual instance where a young boy seeing a whiteman passing through a village went up to him and said, "Good morning sir. This is my head!" From this incident, one can tell at what stage of English acquisition the boy is. Obviously, the expression has nothing to do with the situation in which it is uttered. All that it goes to show is that the poor child is showing off the little English that he knows, and who better to do it to than a native English speaker?

It is perhaps inevitable that a certain amount of non-functional structures will be introduced in the early stages of language learning. Structures such as "This is a -" are useful for introducing vocabulary items. Others such as "The - is on the -" are useful for showing rlationships between objects. However, it is important to move away from the abstract context of classroom acquisition to application of such structures to appropriate real-life situations.

One other example of the inadequacy of a structural approach is the universal exercise of the shortened answer which learners are encouraged to produce in place of the long one. For example,

Are you coming?	Yes, I am
Is she young?	Yes, she is.

Bouton (1987) has drawn attention to the need to qualify such answers in the light of pragmatic perspective. As he rightly observes, short answers are inappropriate to questions such as:

Are you going to miss our party tonight?	Yes, I am.
Did you lose the book I gave you?	Yes, I did.

One simply does not give such short answers without some apology or reassurance to indicate that no slight is intended. In spite of the view expressed by Swan (1985: 91) that "pragmatics (the study of what we do with language) is greatly overvalued at the moment in the same way as grammar has been overvalued in the past", any effective language teaching and language learning cannot afford to ignore the role of pragmatics in relation to language structure.

Underlying any curriculum design and methodology is a theory of language acquisition. As far as SLA is concerned, some of these theories, including the Monitor Model, information processing model, acculturation model, and motivation-aptitude model have been mentioned in the course of the preceding discussion. One other interesting model not specifically mentioned is the Bangalore Project task-based model in which language form is learnt through a concentration on meaning (Brumfit 1984, Prabhu 1987). Although each of these theories presents a useful insight into an aspect of SLA, we cannot agree more with critics of SLA theories who conclude that, useful as SLA research and theorizing may be, it is "premature for any one of these models to be adopted as the sole basis for teaching, because, however right or wrong they may be, none of them covers more than a small fraction of what the students need" (Cook 1991: 131). This same view is reinforced by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991: 3-4) when they say:

> at the moment SLA research does reveal to a certain extent what learners do and what they know. It has not yet, however, reached the point where we can say with assurance how they have come to do and to know these things, and we are further still from saying what teaching practices should therefore follow.

What all this shows is that models and theories of SLA are to be taken as a guide and no rigid adherence to a specific one is called for, since no single model or theory may be considered adequate for now for all ramifications of second language teaching and learning. However, any theory that ignores the role of the first language in second language acquisition or plays down the communicative role of the second language in a social context is most likely to be farthest from any claim of adequacy.

LANGUAGE MATERIALS

In deciding on language materials to be used in L2 or FL instruction, a number of basic questions must be considered: What variety must texts be based on? Within this variety, which examples can be considered appropriate, especially taking into consideration learner needs as well as social and pragmatic uses of the language? Since language is culture-based, how should the material be organized to reflect differences in the learner's culture and that of the language he or she is acquiring?

In teaching a foreign language, the question of variety or model of the language to be taught does not present a major problem. The usual practice is to present some native-speaker variety and aim at the acquisition of this model, even though actual performance may fall short of it. In the case of an L2, however, another dimension arises because of the institutionalized and generally acceptable varieties which qualify to be used as models of teaching and acquisition. English as a second language provides a good example of the considerations that come into play in this regard.

Notwithstanding the concerns of those who believe in a monolithic international standard English as the proper norm for SLA, the case for pluralism of standards arising from nativization of English in non-native contexts ably put by Kachru (1987, 1989) is now generally accepted in ELT circles. Thus, the norm of English to be taught in Nigeria will be different from that of Liberia and both of them will be considered different but not inferior to native varieties. There are, however, two problems that have to be tackled. First, since each non-native variety consists of subvarieties ranging from educated standard to sub-standard and pidginized forms, which subvariety does one consider as representing the norm for the variety? Second, how acceptable are specific usages especially for purposes of teaching and examining?

In relation to the first problem, experience has shown that certain extremes can be easily eliminated and a broad consensus reached on an educated standard. The second problem of which usages to accept and which to reject constitutes a more serious problem. Ideally, an "unacceptable" usage must not be found in a textbook; it should not be marked right by the teacher nor must it be allowed in examinations. The complexity of this problem can be illustrated in the results of a study conducted by Williams (1984). Forty items including pluralization of mass nouns, omission of definite article, adjective used as verb, wrong question tag etc. most of which are common features of Nigerian English were subjected to an Acceptability Rating Scale as well as a forced-choice format in a Use of English test administered to 208 graduates and 150 tertiary level students respectively. In general, the results showed that the higher the level of education, the greater the rejection of the so-called Nigerianisms. But there were also inconsistencies. For example, while *furnitures* was low on the acceptability scale (10% of graduates and 39% of tertiary students), equipments was considered more acceptable (35% of graduates, 69% of tertiary students). Some expressions such as "The Secretary travelled to Kaduna", "Majority of the members" were overwhelmingly accepted by both categories of respondents. What this shows is that although Nigerian English is a reality, there is still a lot of indeterminacy when it comes to particular expressions that should be admitted, especially for teaching and examining purposes (Bamgbose 1983).

In considering what is appropriate and what is not, linguistic appropriateness in terms of correctness of rules or variety is only one aspect. Texts must also be geared to learner needs and

opportunities for use. In the *Foreign Service Institute Hausa Basic Course* (Hodge and Umaru 1963) one of the sentences in Unit 3 is *ìnà nè ófishìn jàkàdàn Amirkà*? '*Where is the American Consulate*'? For a text meant for American students arriving in Northern Nigeria, this may make sense, but the utility of this expression for functioning generally in that part of the country is almost nil. Several manuals for teaching second or foreign African languages often start with greetings. In the cultural context, this may make good sense; but it is wrong to extend this to language manuals in Western societies where greetings don't have such a high functional load. From my experience in Germany, a manual for Africans learning German should give high priority to the teaching of numerals. This is because one has to use them in everyday encounters in the shops, banks, supermarkets, restaurants, etc. Failure to master numerals in such situations may necessitate the device of topic avoidance (Tarone 1980: 429) for example, by simply handing over a large denomination note whenever payment has to be made, and of course, not disputing any bill presented.

Learner needs also presuppose avoidance of empty linguistic examples designed to teach particular grammatical points. The famous ELT drill, *Go to the door, What are you doing?, I am going to the door.*, falls into this category. Its pragmatic use is virtually nil as it is limited to classroom exchange. This is the sort of text that has been referred to as 'TEFLese' - "a language designed to illustrate the workings of a simplified grammatical system and bearing a beguiling but ultimately false similarity to real English" (Willis 1990: vii). It is reminiscent of Edward Sapir's famous linguistic sentence "The farmer kills the duckling" whose relevance is not in any sense communicative but merely illustrative of the agentive, the singular and the diminutive suffixes, as well as the SVO word order.

A problematic aspect of second language learning is the contact and possible conflict between the learner's culture and that represented by the target language. Although it is possible to adapt a second language to express one's own culture, the fact is that there is still a constant relevance and comparison between the cultural norms of one's own language and those of a second language. Bamgbose (1992) identifies two kinds of cultural interference: language-motivated and culture-motivated. The former is a case where the interference from the first language to the second involves a transfer of an aspect of the culture of the first language into the second. For example, the transfer of the word order of one language to another may appear to be no more than a mere linguistic phenomenon. Hence to say "I and you" instead of "You and I" is to use a phrasal coordination which sounds impolite in English. The other type of interference is culture-motivated and it arises from an attempt to translate certain aspects of one's culture into the language embodying the culture of another. For example, a Yoruba-English bilingual who refers to "a next-room neighbour" instead of "a next-door neighbour" is only trying to express the reality of his own cultural experience of a neighbour who lives in the next room in a multi-tenanted house, instead of the more affluent and rarer situation of a neighbour who lives in the next house or apartment.

The relevance of cultural interference in the selection of texts is the bearing it has on appropriateness. What is culturally appropriate in one situation may not be in another. For example, Quirk's (1962: 217) letter-writing rule that prescribes an opening with "Dear Mr. Jones" and an ending with "Yours sincerely," which must not be mixed with "Dear Sir" and "Yours faithfully," cannot be taught in ESL situations in many African countries. This is because of the cultural norms of respect for elders which will prevent their being addressed by

name. Instead, what most people do is to mix the formulas by opening the letter with "Dear Sir" and closing with "Yours sincerely", - a practice which Quirk says experienced and well-educated people avoid and frown upon.

The implication of linguistic and cultural pluralism in the second language situation is multiple standards and a potential for cultural conflict, for example, in the production of expressions which may be interpreted by one's interlocutors as impolite or whose meaning may be entirely misunderstood. Textbook writers have to be sensitive to such expressions as well as to negative value-laden terms rooted in Anglo-Saxon culture. For example, compounds with 'black' such as *black-hearted, black art, black eye, blackleg, blacklist, blackmail, black mark, black market, black sheep, blackspot*, etc. will have to be explained against the background of the culture that gave rise to these pejorative meanings. Observed biases in American ESL teaching materials are said to include sexism, racism, ageism, elitism, heterosexism, etc. (Littlejohn and Windeatt 1989).

LANGUAGE TEACHERS

The teacher has always been the focus of the second language teaching classroom. In spite of approaches that tend to de-emphasize the role of the teacher, it is estimated that "teacher-talk makes up around 70% of classroom language" (Cook 1991:94). In many countries in the African region characterized by high pupils-teacher ratio, the role of the teacher becomes more important still, especially as she or he may have to cope with large classes. It is reported that in 1985-86, some African countries had ratios of 60-70 pupils per teacher (UNESCO-UNICEF 1990: 27-28) and large classes ranging from 40 to 60 pupils are not unusual in some primary schools. The context in which second language teaching takes place is therefore often characterized by inadequate teacher strength, and poorly qualified or even unqualified teachers.

In Nigeria, it is recognized that the only viable solution to the teacher problem lies in the training and production of more teachers; but almost in desperation and as a short-term measure, it has been proposed that unqualified native speakers be employed to teach Nigerian languages as second languages much in the same way as artisans are recruited to teach vocational subjects. The outcome from such teaching is expected to be at least a rudimentary oral acquaintance with the language. Needless to say, this is a most unsatisfactory practice, and it is not surprising that it has been singularly unsuccessful in the Junior High Schools where it was meant to operate.

The more viable strategies also being employed include training and deployment of specialist teachers and acculturation programs. Second language teachers of Nigerian languages are made to specialize in their first language as well as a Nigerian L2. Because they major in two languages, their value as language teachers is further enhanced. The conventional training of teachers of ESL remains unchanged, but there is more emphasis on language skills as opposed to a literature-dominated curriculum. What remains to be done is the need to recognize specialist teachers of English at all levels of education, including the primary school. In the Six-Year Primary Project, a specialist teacher was used for teaching English in the experimental classes, but this aspect of the Project was later abandoned. Until the general quality of teachers improves, it is wasteful and unproductive to expect every primary school teacher to be

a good model of both spoken and written English, even of the variety accepted as the norm in Nigeria.

In order to accelerate the production of specialist graduate teachers of Nigerian languages, a National Institute for Nigerian languages has been established at Aba in Abia State of Nigeria. Students admitted to this Institute will major in two Nigerian languages, and be given a reasonable background in linguistics and methodology. Such specialized training is a sensible approach to the second language teacher problem.

One of the recurrent problems in pre-service training of language teachers is the need to give them maximum exposure, especially to the spoken form of the language. In the case of foreign languages such as French, German and Russian, university students had built in into their program, a compulsory one-year abroad scheme. This scheme worked out very well when foreign aid was easily obtained, and the Nigerian economy itself was strong enough to sustain the cost of fares to Europe for all language students. In the era of poor funding, an alternative was found in sending students to the neighbouring West African country of Togo. Even that has now become too expensive. Now, a final solution has been found in "the village concept". A French Village has been established in Badagry near the border with Benin Republic and an Arabic Village has also been established in Borno State near the border with the Chad Republic. For Nigerian languages, acculturation is effected through exchange programs between institutions in different parts of the country.

The teacher problem discussed above is intended to show that no matter how good a language policy is, how effective the curriculum, and how adequate the teaching materials, not much can be achieved without the guidance of a qualified teacher. As the trite saying goes, it is better to have poor materials in the hands of a good teacher than excellent materials in the hands of a bad teacher.

CONCLUSION

Second language learning in a multilingual context presents a challenge to varying groups of persons involved in the language teaching enterprise: the policy-maker, the curriculum designer, the materials writer, but above all the teacher and the learner. One essential ingredient for success is a positive attitude to a multilingual and multicultural context of language instruction. Following Pennington (1989: 96), there are two ways of looking at multilingualism and multiculturalism in the context of second language acquisition. From a narrow, pessimistic, monocultural perspective, their attendant multiple learner needs, incidence of bilingualism, and varied cultural backgrounds, values and experiences can be seen as an impediment; but a more optimistic and positive approach is to consider these factors as an asset that the second language teacher could exploit for successful language teaching and learning.

REFERENCES

Adegbija, E. (1991). *The context of language planning in Africa: An illustration with Nigeria.*

Appel, R. & Muysken, P. . (1987). *Language contact and bilingualism.* London: Edward Arnold.

Bamgbose, A. (1983). Standard Nigeria English: Issues of identification. In Braj Kachru (Ed.), *The other tongue: English across cultures* (pp. 99-111). Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Bamgbose, A. (1991). *Language and the nation.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Bamgbose, A. (1992). *Language and cross-cultural communication.* Duisburg: L.A.U.D. Series B, Paper No. 233.

Bokamba, E. & Tlou, J. (1980). The consequences of language policies of African states vis-à-vis education. In K. Mateene (Ed.), *Reconsideration of African linguistic policies* (pp. 45-64). Kampala: O.A.U. Bureau of Languages.

Bouton, L. F. (1987). Pedagogical grammar: On the interface of syntax and pragmatics. *World Englishes* , 6 (3), 217-226.

Brumfit, C. (1984). *Communicative methodology in language teaching: The roles of frequency and accuracy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cook, V. (1991). *Second language learning and language teaching.* London: Edward Arnold.

Fafunwa, A. B., Macauley, J. & Sokoya, J. A. F. (Eds.). (1989). *Education in mother tongue: The Ife primary education research project.* Ibadan: University Press Ltd.

FMEST. (1985). *National curriculum for junior secondary schools , Vol. 4.* Lagos: Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1981). *National policy on education* (rev. ed.). Lagos: Federal Government Press.

Gardner, R. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation.* London: Edward Arnold.

Gardner, R., Smythe, R. C. & Brunet, G. R. (1977). Intensive second language study: Effects of attitudes, motivation and French achievement. *Language Learning, 27*(2), 243-261.

Grieve, D.W. (1964). *English language examining.* Lagos: African Universities Press for The West African Examination Council.

Hodge, C. & Umaru, I. (1963). *Foreign service institute Hausa basic course* . Washington, D.C.: Department of State.

Johnson, R. K. (Ed.). (1989). *The second language curriculum.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kachru, B. (1987). The past and prejudice: Toward demythologizing the English canon. In Ross Steele & Terry Treadgold (Eds.), *Language Topics: Essays in honour of Michael Halliday* (pp. 245-256). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co.

Kachru, B. (1989). Teaching world English. *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 15*(1), 85-95.

Krashen, S. (1981). The "Fundamental pedagogical principle" in second language teaching. *Studia Linguistica, 35*(1-2), 50-70.

Larsen-Freeman, D. & Long, M.H. (Eds.). (1991). *An Introduction to second language acquisition research* . London: Longman.

Littlejohn, A. & S. Windeatt. (1989). Beyond language learning: perspectives on materials design. In Robert K. Johnson (Ed.), *The second language curriculum* (pp. 55-175). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McLaughlin, Rossman, B. R. & McLeod, B. (1983). Second language learning: An information-processing perspective. *Language Learning 33*, 135-158.

Pennington, M. C. (1989). Faculty development for language programs. In Robert K. Johnson (Ed.), *The second language curriculum* (pp. 91-110). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Prabhu, N. S. (1987). *Second language pedagogy* . Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Quirk, R. (1962). *The use of English.* London: Longmans.

Scarcella, R. C. & Higa, C. (1981). Input negotiation and age differences in second language acquisition. *Language Learning, 31* (2), 409-437.

Schumann, J. (1978). The acculturation model for second language acquisition. In R. Gingras (Ed.), *Second language acquisition and foreign language teaching* (pp. 27-50). Arlington, Virginia: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Swan, M. (1985). A critical look at the communicative approach. Originally published as two articles in ELT volumes 39:1 and 39:2 (Reprinted from Richard Rossner and Rod Bolitho (Eds.). (1990). *Currents of Change in English Language Teaching* . Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Tarone, E. (1980). Communication strategies, foreigner talk and repair in interlanguage. *Language Learning , 30* 2), 417-431.

Tollefson, J. W. (1981). The role of language planning in second language acquisition. *Language Learning , 31*(2), 337-348.

Unesco-Unicef. (1990). *Breda-Stat special: Towards education for all in africa: Starting point.* Dakar: Unesco Regional Office for Education in Africa; Abidjan: Unicef West and Central Africa Regional Office.

Widdowson, H.G. (1990). *Aspects of language teaching* . Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, D. (1984). Acceptability of Nigerian English for academic purposes. *Nigeria Educational Forum , 7* (1), 17-32.

Willis, D. (1990). *The lexical syllabus: A new approach to language teaching* . London and Glasgow: Collins E.L.T.